

MISSOULA
COUNTY



MISSOULA CITY-COUNTY

Senate Local Govt. Comm.

Exhibit No. 3

MISSOULA CITY-COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

WATER QUALITY DISTRICT

Bill No. 301 WEST ALDER

MISSOULA, MONTANA 59802-4123

(406) 258-4890 FAX # (406) 258-4781

website: www.co.missoula.mt.us/waterquality

January 27, 2011

Senator Jon Sonju, Chairman
Senate Local Government Committee
State Capitol
Helena MT 59620

RE: Senate Bill 191

Dear Chairman Sonju and Members of the Committee,

The Missoula City-County Health Department supports Senate Bill 191. Most realtors in our County routinely provide their clients with basic information on water and wastewater systems. We receive frequent inquiries from real estate agents regarding septic systems, who ask for copies of permits and inspection reports. The information is very useful to both sellers and potential buyers of properties.

This bill would require a simple disclosure about a septic system, with available information on the location of the system, a copy of the permit, well log and other relevant information. It makes sense for buyers and sellers to have this basic information, and protects everyone from future problems.

The bill also would require records of system maintenance, if available. It is smart for a buyer to ask if the system been pumped in the past five years. If not, for a relatively small cost the system can be maintained when the property changes hands. A septic system is an investment, and it needs to be maintained, just like changing the oil in your car. Spending a small amount on maintenance can save thousands of dollars later. The bill would be better if it required this routine maintenance at the time of sale, or within the past five years. While the system is being maintained it would be a good time to ensure that the septic tank had a riser installed, to make it easy to locate and maintain the next time it needs to be pumped out.

But this bill is a step in the right direction to provide basic information at the time of property sale. It will help buyers be certain of their investment and to know whether their future plans for the property are possible without major modifications to the septic system. Sellers would also be protected against future disputes with buyers who have problems with their septic systems.

Thank you for considering these comments.

Sincerely,

Peter Nielsen
Environmental Health Supervisor